



*Carson, Esq. Surgeon*  
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*With* INQUIRY *Respectfully Comp*  
*from* *the* *Author*  
RESPECTING

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MR. CHARLES WHITLAW'S PRACTICE  
IN  
SCROFULA AND CANCER;

AND

THE PROPRIETY OF INSTITUTING

AN ASYLUM,

UNDER HIS CARE, FOR THESE COMPLAINTS, &c.

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BY

A. RENNIE, SURGEON.  
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## SCROFULA, CANCER, &c.

*Statement of Facts, illustrative of the Nature of Mr. Charles Whitlaw's Pretensions to cure Cancer, Scrofula, &c. by American Plants.*

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THE pretensions of Mr. Charles Whitlaw are pretty generally known. This person has, for some time past, declared to the public that he possesses the means of curing Cancer and Scrofula in their most distressing forms; that these means consist of certain plants hitherto unknown to medical practitioners, the knowledge of which he obtained from the Indians of North America. It is also known, that a numerous Committee of respectable gentlemen have declared their conviction of the efficacy of Mr. Whitlaw's treatment in these diseases, and accordingly zealously patronize him, and recommend the afflicted to put themselves under his care.

These gentlemen have proposed, that an Asylum should be instituted under Mr. Whitlaw's superintendence, calculated for receiving patients of the above description. Two public meetings have accordingly been called, and some contributions have been made towards such an Institution. The following pages are the result of an inquiry to ascertain whether Mr. Whitlaw's pretensions are well founded; of course involving the question, whether the proposals alluded to respecting an Asylum, are advisable.

## PREFACE.

THE WRITER feels it incumbent on him, *in limine*, to obviate some objections which may be made to the course of inquiry he has been, and still is pursuing. He is aware, that persons who have taken a very lively interest in Mr. Whitlaw's success, may question his right to investigate and give publicity to his practice; while others, especially disinterested and enlightened individuals, regarding Mr. Whitlaw's pretensions, from their palpable absurdity, rather as an object of ridicule and contempt, than as meriting serious inquiry, may conceive it equally *puerile* to investigate his practice as that of Dr. Solomon, Dr. Brodum, or any other tolerated quack of the day.

To the latter class of persons he would say, that it is not for them that the following very diffuse and desultory remarks are chiefly intended. It will be enough if they select such facts as appear to them sufficient to settle the point of Mr. Whitlaw's *merits*, if dubious: and to assist them in forming a decision, the disclosure of the names, &c. of those plants on which his pretensions are founded, may be an object of no small consequence. Besides, it is to be recollected, that Mr. Whitlaw appears before the public in very peculiar circumstances, that he is supported by a large and respectable body of citizens, whose influence and patronage diffuse the evil consequences of an imposition, if it should prove to be such, wide over the mass of the community. In this view, the utility of the following inquiry is manifest.

To the patrons of Mr. Whitlaw, who offer objections to my inquiries, I would beg leave to submit, that every individual who makes professions to society, calculated to do much good or much harm to the lives of individuals, comes justly under the cognizance of the medical profession; and on this principle, the novel propositions of Mr. Whitlaw are the fair subject of investigation to one who by his profession is called upon to do whatever lies in his power for the health of the community.

Besides, both Mr. Whitlaw and the Committee have publicly declared, that all his transactions and practice are open to the strictest scrutiny of medical men. Now, if such a profession is held out, they have no right whatever to cavil at my taking advantage of it by inquiring for myself; and after I have inquired, I am imperatively called upon to declare the result to the public, otherwise my silence will be construed into an approval of the practice. Mr. Whitlaw and the Committee might then declare to the public, "Medical men have scrutinized our proceedings—neither their *prejudices* nor their *jealousy* have been able to detect an objection to our treatment—we claim your confidence."

On general principles, investigation is quite unobjectionable and indispensable, as an act of justice at once to Mr. Whitlaw and the



public; and for the same reason, after inquiry, *silence is unpardonable*. For either Mr. Whitlaw is an impostor, or he is able to do what he professes—to cure scrofula and cancer:—there is no alternative. If he does possess new remedies capable of curing these diseases, inquiry will make his merits known, and both he and society will reap the benefit; but if he is an impostor, and holds out promises to the credulous victims of these complaints, which he cannot fulfil, merely for the purpose of picking their pockets and filling his own, the sooner he is unmasked the better will it be for society.

I am sensible the task I have undertaken is an arduous one, for every one knows how easy it is, in such a place as London, to procure poor unprincipled wretches who for pay will swear to a cure, and how difficult it would be in the present instance to detect such, even although they did exist. Besides, it is a common game with quacks and charlatans, when a cure does take place under their hands, to take to themselves the full credit for it, whether they be entitled or not; to blazon forth the report in all directions, and to keep the solitary case in constant recourse as a reference; while the hundreds treated without benefit, are quietly and disingenuously permitted to glide unnoticed into the mass of society, where their own reluctance to confess themselves dupes, their false delicacy in exposing even the ignorance and knavery of one to whose treatment they have submitted, induce them to cover their chagrin in studied concealment. The quack himself is hoisted into notice as a centre point of notoriety, where his scanty cases of fortuitous success are kept in constant and prominent display, and the same alleged cures are made to operate new belief on every successive inquirer, while the magnified accounts are trumpeted forth, making fresh impressions on the credulous wherever they find their way.

In the present instance, I have had many disadvantages to contend with in tracing out cases to their issue; and not unoften after having, at much expense of time and trouble, obtained the address of an interesting case, have I been mortified to find prepossessions so strong against me, in consequence of misrepresentations industriously circulated, that I have been unable to obtain the necessary particulars to afford any conclusion. Notwithstanding all the influence of those who have endeavoured to baffle and to counteract my efforts at investigation, I have at length succeeded in accumulating such a weight of evidence as to go far in enlightening the public mind.

My procedure will, at least, have this *good effect*, it will force the Committee to adduce cases as evidence in return; and when these are adduced, it shall be my business to strip them of all adventitious appendages, and to exhibit them in their naked simplicity. In this way, the interests of the public will be safe, for Mr. Whitlaw will be thereby compelled to go through the ordeal of, I hope, a correct medical investigation, which he should have been required to submit to, before receiving a *single patron*. Well would it have been for the numerous disappointed individuals, whose cases I have

beside me, if such a course had been followed from the very commencement; and I cannot help offering my tribute of unqualified approbation of the answer of a venerable and most respectable clergyman of my acquaintance, to the pressing solicitations of Mr. Whitlaw to procure his patronage: "No, no, Mr. Whitlaw; all that you say may be very true, but I neither know you, nor am I a judge of these matters; go you to Sir Astley Cooper, or any other medical man, on whose professional abilities and moral character I can rely; get him to stand between you and the public, and to declare your practice safe and efficient; and then I'll give you the little influence I possess with all my heart." Nearly a similar answer did he receive from two other respectable clergymen, on whom he had made the same attempt. These gentlemen displayed a most laudable caution, which cannot be too highly commended.

Unfortunately, I fear, for society, he has met with those even of this profession, who have been induced to listen to his requests and to believe his representations. Against these persons I bring forward no other charge than that of *precipitancy*. They, I believe, possess the purest motives, and I have no doubt that it was nothing else than their humanity and benevolence which may have rendered them so credulous as to patronize and recommend a man of whom they know nothing, and a practice they do not understand.

To such I would beg leave to suggest a few considerations, well deserving of serious attention. Every one who reflects on the nature of the medical profession, must admit that there is no one profession which implies a weightier and more awful responsibility, no one in which the necessity for the highest qualifications is more urgent. The practitioner has the life of his fellow-creatures in his hands—in many cases it hangs entirely upon his knowledge, upon his caution, upon his judgment. We will venture to affirm, that no man of true principle will engage in such an office unless he is conscious of being qualified to the full, and after he has engaged in it he will shudder at the thought of treating, except with the most cautious circumspection, any case he does not thoroughly understand. A single unguarded stroke of his knife—a single injudicious hasty prescription, may launch a soul into another world; that soul shall, in the day of judgment, be required at his hands. Sure I am, that if this awful impression were borne about with us in our daily walks of professional duty, it were enough to imprint the aspect of cautious, and studious, and unassuming deliberation on every one of our doings. If this incontrovertible and seriously important truth were duly appreciated, the murderous reign of quackery, and imposition, and presumption, and ignorance, over the lives of the afflicted, would speedily pass away. A person would not be found, who, to accumulate even a " princely fortune " (Mr. Whitlaw's own words to a friend of mine), would profess to cure diseases of which he was entirely ignorant; nor would such an one meet with a single individual to exhibit him to the notice of credulity; because, when a human life is at stake, no

one would have the hardihood to recommend a course of treatment, the consequences of which he could not appreciate, except in so far as they might involve *him* in the most awful responsibility.

Let such considerations as these have their due weight in preventing the credulous from being led away by the false and sinister imputations of prejudice and jealousy, with which unprincipled impostors so impudently charge the medical profession. All attempts to run down regular education and medical examinations, can only tend ultimately to exalt them higher in the scale of importance. No one ever will stoop to such degrading resources who himself has merit to enable him to pass the ordeal; and we submit it to the public to draw the inference, whether it is a better proof of any man's abilities to adduce in his favour the testimony of adequate judges, or by unblushing falsehoods and detraction to undervalue men of science, penetration, and experience, because he is conscious of no one sterling qualification to recommend him to their notice.

My own motives in undertaking this inquiry may be viewed in the *most illiberal light*; and I may encounter much hostility from those who patronize and support Mr. Whitlaw, inasmuch as my views respecting that person, if proved to be correct, are an imputation upon their judgment; but I am not to be deterred by such considerations from what is my plain and obvious duty, viz. by eliciting truth and stating fact, to show what is merit—what is *pretension and imposture*.



# TRANSACTIONS OF THE COMMITTEE,

&c.

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I HAD for some time heard of the pretensions of Mr. Whitlaw, and of extraordinary cures having taken place under his treatment, attested by persons of great respectability; but the vague, general way in which these statements were made, together with their extraordinary nature, and other circumstances connected with them, induced me to regard them as not at all worthy of credit. In compliance, however, with the request of a most respectable friend, who had largely subscribed, but was quite at a loss to decide on the case, I was prevailed upon to go to Mr. Whitlaw's house, and to inspect his patients, that I might thereby be enabled to arrive at the truth.

Though I felt that I was, in some degree, compromising my respectability by even a temporary intercourse with a person whose pretensions were of a dubious nature, but of such a decided aspect, that if they did not imply the very highest degree of merit, they must indicate the deepest atrocity of guilt, yet I resolved to make the sacrifice for the sake of an object so important.

Accordingly, for several weeks, both in London and at Margate, I embraced every opportunity of inquiring into Mr. Whitlaw's practice, and facilities of inquiry were for a short time held out to me both by himself and the Committee.

Some circumstances occurred in the course of my investigations which rendered it necessary for me to declare my decided disapproval of Mr. Whitlaw's treatment in particular cases, and of the absurdity of his speculations, and that both to himself and to others; and also, to show that I was not to be biassed by personal interest to give judgment in his favour. From that time, the sources of information were locked up with jealous care, and the parsimonious morsels of cases, which could not, with a good grace, be withheld, were proffered in such a sparing and desultory manner, as to give me no opportunity of forming any judgment. I could only see the patients at the public exhibition, and those whom I saw to-day I could rarely see again, so that I must be satisfied with the general accounts of their progress which Mr. Whitlaw himself thought proper to give. Here was all the appearance of a fair and full investigation, but none of the reality. In such circumstances to prosecute any inquiry were fruitless, conducted in this manner. I therefore took advantage of the invitation of the Committee, and the proffer of Mr. Whitlaw, that all his patients were open to the free inquiry of medical men, and I waited upon all those patients whose address I could obtain, to ascertain the effects of his treatment from their own account. In this manner I obtained a considerable number of accurate and unvarnished statements of facts sufficient to convince me, among other things, that some assertions of Mr. Whitlaw's were altogether unfounded. I had heard him, for instance, declare before some of the Committee, that he could cure 95 cases in 100 of Cancer or Scrofula; I therefore had a right to expect

cures, and if I found none, I had a right to say, that he boasted what he could not perform. Cures I did not find of either Cancer or Scrofula; on the contrary, many cases treated for months without benefit. If, therefore, Mr. Whitlaw in one case boasted to do what he could not, what security had the public that he did not do so in all? All confidence in what he said must be at an end. Many other of his speculations were the most unintelligible of absurdities, a burlesque upon common sense; and I have seen with utter astonishment some men, bearing a sensible intelligent aspect, listening with eager curiosity, among women and children, and swallowing with most satisfied rapacity of credulity, the whole mouthfuls of nonsense under the name of lectures, which were really curious only, from the ignorance and incredible inconsistencies they displayed. One instance will suffice: he told a gentleman labouring under an apoplectic complaint, that his disease arose from *acrimony* in the stomach; that this acrimony was received by taking to tea the milk of a cow which had been eating in the pasture of the buttercup; that the poison of this plant was conveyed into his stomach by the milk. Now, the merest child would at once ask, What comes of the stomach of the poor cow? An anatomist, if such an one would deign to listen to the absurdity, would ask, What becomes of the blood-vessels and udder of the cow? How comes it, that acrimony can be conveyed unchanged through these organs without affecting *them*? There cannot be a more melancholy proof of the miserable dearth of intellect, that must reign in the brains of the infatuated victims of credulity, than the fact that Mr. Whitlaw's patients actually believe that their complaints, in many cases, especially Cancers, are owing to this cause, and that he himself is a prodigy of learning, and of botanical acquirements. Such is a specimen of the man whom the Committee patronize, as qualified to treat two of the most obstinate and incurable diseases to which the human frame is liable.

With such impressions as to Mr. Whitlaw's *abilities*, and in this stage of my inquiries as to his practice, the meeting of the 11th July, in the City of London Tavern, took place for the purpose of considering the propriety of instituting an Asylum under his care. Not knowing the precise object of this meeting, I attended with the intention not to state my sentiments, unless called upon by circumstances. These circumstances occurred, for I found that my silence on that occasion must be construed into a sanction of Mr. Whitlaw's mode of treatment; and I conceived it injurious to the public interest to suffer any representations, calculated to mislead the credulous and ignorant, to emanate from a meeting of which I was a member. The following letters, already published, will show the views entertained by different individuals on that occasion, and will further show the transactions which have since occurred.

In the Morning Post of the 16th July, the following account of the meeting on the 11th, made its appearance, evidently framed on purpose to make the most favourable impression by Mr. Whitlaw's friends.



## “SCROFULA AND CANCER.

*“Public Meeting for establishing an Asylum for the Cure of Scrofula and Cancer, under the Care of Mr. Whitlaw, held at the City of London Tavern, on Thursday, the 11th of July; Sir Claudius Stephen Hunter, Bart. in the Chair.*

“The Chairman opened the business by explaining the object of the meeting, ‘The establishment of an Asylum for the reception and cure of Scrofula and Cancer.’ It was necessary that he should explain the motives which induced him to accept the situation in which he was placed. Connected as he was, by charter, with four of the most extensive hospitals in the kingdom, he wished it clearly to be understood that he meant no sort of disrespect to those noble institutions in supporting a new Asylum, for the restoration of those miserable objects who were dismissed from them as incurable.

“Mr. MITFORD read a Report which stated that several gentlemen had organized themselves into a Committee, of which he was chairman, and that they had examined the patients from week to week, under Mr. Whitlaw’s care, from Feb. 1821, to the present period, of whom a great number had been entirely cured, and the rest had experienced essential and permanent relief. So convinced were they of the efficacy of his system of treatment, and of the value of his discoveries to the healing art, that they had called this public meeting for the purpose of establishing an Asylum, in which the benefits of them might be extended to a larger portion of the poor and suffering part of the community, and the knowledge of them to mankind in general, and to the medical profession in particular.

“A series of resolutions, copied from the rules and regulations of similar establishments, were read, which had been passed at a public meeting held for the same purpose at Freemasons’ Tavern, on the 28th of February last. In concluding the Report, the Committee earnestly entreated the charitable attention of the meeting to those afflicted objects, whose diseases often made their existence miserable, and rendered them loathsome to their friends and a burden to society.

“The Hon. and Rev. ANCHITEL GREY moved that the Report be received and adopted, and expressed an anxious wish for the establishment of the proposed Asylum.

“Mr. PETER MOORE, M. P. in seconding the motion, passed a high eulogium upon the chairman for his honourable and praiseworthy conduct, in nobly standing forward in the cause of charity and truth. He alluded to the history of Mr. Whitlaw’s life, and to the great importance of his discoveries to mankind. He could relate numberless instances of the success attending the administration of his remedies, which were prepared solely from vegetables, and therefore innocent in their nature; but he did not wish the meeting to be convinced by his testimony, or that of any other witnesses, but he requested that every individual would come, see, and judge for himself.

“Mr. RENNIE, a surgeon, said, that the Report appeared to him

unsatisfactory, that there have been innumerable similar instances, in which new discoveries have been brought with equal pretensions before the public, which have not, however, stood the test of experiment. He was told that the Committee sanctioned the Report, but he could not suffer it to be received by the meeting, without asking the following questions :—1st, Whether this institution was intended as a test of the efficacy of Mr. Whitlaw's remedies? 2d, Or, whether it was meant as a charitable institution, to be founded upon a conviction, already established, of their efficacy? If the latter, he decidedly objected to it. From what he had observed, the medicines administered had a purgative quality; but he thought that other purgatives might be equally efficacious in the cure of those diseases. He objected to the Asylum as a test of their efficacy, because he thought that the experiment might be tried at a much less expense to the public.

“ Mr. HENRY DRUMMOND said he should not have risen to address the meeting if it were not for a report which had been circulated, that he was convinced of the efficacy of Mr. Whitlaw's remedies, and that he was a strenuous supporter of the Institution. Certainly he never could have authorized such a report, because, so far from being the fact, he had never had the opportunity of witnessing a single cure performed under his system of treatment.

“ Dr. THORNTON said, that as a Member of the Royal College of Physicians, he would not have stood forward as a supporter of Mr. Whitlaw, were he not thoroughly convinced of the great and very superior efficacy of his remedies. He spoke of the powers of vegetable remedies in general, and alluded to two cases of mortification cured by *serpentaria virginica*.

“ Vaccination was known among the peasantry long before it was introduced into general practice by men of science. Hence he considered it wrong to shut our eyes against discoveries, from whatever source they emanated. One case of scrofula in particular given up as incurable by a Dispensary, among many other cases which had come within his own observation, had been restored by Mr. Whitlaw's remedies; and he pointed to a son of Mr. Fox, present at the meeting, who stood a living monument of their efficacy; and he asked whether it was probable that a medical man should have confided his son to Mr. Whitlaw's care, unless he had been previously satisfied upon the subject. Besides the vegetable decoctions, it was intended to introduce the use of the vapour-bath into the Asylum. Sir Arthur Clarke had written in its favour in cases of scrofula, and he (Dr. T.) had no doubt that it would be even more successfully employed when combined with Mr. Whitlaw's remedies.

“ The diet and regimen of the patients were also most strictly regulated. To show the influence of diet on the health of a community, he cited the case of the Icelanders, who used no tea nor coffee, no bread nor cooked meats, beer, wine, nor spirits, their diet consisting of milk, hung beef and mutton, cabbages, and Iceland moss



boiled to a jelly; and in the evening, instead of exposing themselves to the night air, their time was spent in reading and other instructive amusements. Hence, in a climate more rigorous than ours, they were totally exempt from scrofula and consumption. He concluded with trusting that the inconclusive arguments of the young gentleman who had spoken would not make any deeper impression upon the meeting than they had evidently done upon the mind of the worthy chairman.

“Mr. HARRIS said that the young surgeon had stated that he thought the Asylum perfectly unnecessary. He, however, did see the necessity of the proposed Institution; in the first place, from the universal prevalence of the diseases; and, secondly, from their almost universally baffling the skill of medical men. From having carefully considered the opinions both hostile as well as favourable to the plan, he thought that some attention was due to what he said: the prejudices of medical men were so great on all occasions, that on the introduction of any improvement, opposition must be expected. He thought that only the chance of affording relief to cases dismissed as incurable from our public hospitals, was a sufficient inducement for establishing the proposed Asylum; particularly as it was intended to admit gentlemen of the medical profession under the direction of the Committee (which was necessary to avoid improper interference) to an inspection of the cases. By the judgment of the profession the Institution must stand or fall; but, for his part, he had no doubt of the result. He thought that Mr. Rennie mistook both the object and probable effect of the intended Institution. No imputation was intended by it against the character and skill of medical men, because those diseases were not under their control. If Mr. Rennie was offended that Scrofula and Cancer had been *opprobria medicorum*, he would rather call them *opprobria medicinæ*. It was less for want of medical skill, than of medical means, that so little had hitherto been effected towards the cure of those diseases. Mr. Rennie was fresh from the schools; he had been wandering in the garden of science, where he had doubtless culled both the flowers and the fruits. But Mr. Whitlaw had pretensions of a different nature; he had traversed the wilds of America for twenty years, and had there acquired much valuable information, and made those discoveries which he now offered to the notice of the public. Mr. H. could not see clearly the grounds for Mr. Rennie’s objections to the Asylum. He asked whether it was intended as a test of Mr. Whitlaw’s remedies, or as a charitable institution, founded on an established conviction of their efficacy. If the latter,—he objected to it, because he was not satisfied on that point. But had Mr. Rennie examined the treatment a sufficient length of time to become a competent judge? Had he watched the cases of Mr. Whitlaw for eighteen months, as the Committee had done? Had he watched them for eighteen weeks? or how much longer than eighteen days had he attended to them?

It was not to be supposed that diseases deeply rooted were to be instantaneously eradicated from the constitution.

“Mr. DOUGLAS next related the case of his son, afflicted with lumbar abscess, and was so reduced by disease, that he was given over as a lost case by the most eminent surgeons in London, at Brighton, and at Margate; and it was considered as morally impossible that he could live. In this state he applied to Mr. Whitlaw, who gave him medicines, and in four or five days his pains ceased, his appetite returned, and his strength improved. He had sent him to school, and had no doubt of his perfect recovery. It was gratitude to Mr. Whitlaw that induced him to address the meeting.

“Sir GERARD NOEL asked what the grounds were, upon which the Institution was opposed? He said that no possible harm could result from it; but, on the contrary, the greatest possible good might arise from it to the medical profession.

“Mr. SEARLE related the cases of his three children, who were sufferers from scrofula, one of whom had been cured, and the other two he had no doubt would soon recover.

“Captain AMBROSE stated, that he had been nineteen years in a hot climate, where, in consequence of repeated attacks of fever, his health had been broken, his body was covered with sores, and his strength so reduced, that he could scarcely sit upright on the voyage homewards; he applied to physicians and surgeons of great eminence, without more than obtaining partial and temporary relief. A medical gentleman at Cheltenham, indeed, told him that there was no specific for the disease. In this state of despair he applied to Mr. Whitlaw, four months ago, and now he rejoiced in coming forward to give his public testimony in favour of the remedies by which he had been happily restored.

“The Rev. HENRY THOMSON said, that the cases that had been adduced were not picked cases; they were not slight and trivial, but of the most desperate description. He mentioned one lad, aged eleven, who had been confined five years with lumbar abscesses and scrofulous sores on various parts of his body, whom he had placed under Mr. Whitlaw's care; the benefit he had received gave him confident hopes of a perfect recovery.

“The Rev. ALEXANDER FLETCHER was present at the last meeting, and said that he had only two fresh instances on the score of evidence to adduce in favour of Mr. Whitlaw's remedies. He who attempted to introduce any new remedy must lay it to account to meet with opposition from the faculty; but this very opposition was serviceable, because it excited investigation, without which the meeting would be destitute of this stamp of excellence. He then passed a high eulogium on the character of Mr. Whitlaw. He had many and convincing proofs of his charity and benevolence; virtues which he was always ready to exercise at the expense of his fortune. He could not be accused of avarice; for he had seen him lavish immense sums of money, without a grudge, on the poor and distressed, which



at one time had exhausted his property, both capital and interest. In one instance to which he alluded, Mr. Whitlaw accompanied him to a garret where a female was confined by disease, and reduced to the lowest ebb of misery. She had tried every remedy in vain, and had been dismissed from the Middlesex Hospital as incurable. Her head was exposed by sores to the bone. Mr. Whitlaw visited and supplied her with remedies; she gradually and perfectly recovered, and the flesh closed over the sores like the bark of a wounded tree. The other was the case of a young gentleman, who was so afflicted that he was quite loathsome to his companions. His studies were laid aside, his mind was become gloomy, and he was actually in despair; his afflicting maladies were now removed, his wounds were closed, and he was completely recovered.

“ Mr. MITFORD moved a vote of thanks to the Chairman for presiding on the occasion, and for his very able and impartial conduct in the chair.

“ Mr. HARRIS said, that he should be extremely sorry for it to go forth to the world, that the meeting was at all prejudiced by the discussion which had taken place; but of this he was assured, that the more the question was agitated, the more fully the efficacy of Mr. Whitlaw's system of treatment would be displayed.

“ Sir CLAUDIUS STEPHEN HUNTER returned thanks, and said, that although the meeting was not so fully attended as he could have wished, great things frequently resulted from small beginnings. He mentioned our holy religion as an illustration; and concluded with an earnest wish, that, by the blessing of Divine Providence, the plan for establishing the proposed Asylum might be successfully carried into execution.”

On this account, in the same paper of the 24th, I found it necessary to make the following remarks:

“ *To the Editor of the Morning Post.*

“ SIR,—In two accounts which I have seen of what passed at the meeting on the 11th, in the City of London Tavern, to consider proposals for the erection of an Asylum for Scrofula and Cancer, under Mr. Whitlaw's superintendence, my reasons for objecting to the plan are stated in a manner so curtailed, as by no means to convey their real force. Having no object in view but the discovery of truth, I beg you to do me the favour to lay before the public the following statement of the result of my observations hitherto of Mr. Whitlaw's treatment as exhibiting my grounds of objection.

“ I thought the Report read by the Secretary unsatisfactory. This Report commenced with glowing representations of the dreadful nature of the diseases proposed to be cured, Cancer and Scrofula. This, though no doubt calculated to awaken feelings of sympathy and commiseration for the afflicted in every humane breast, could

surely do nothing to inform the judgment respecting the efficacy of the remedies in question.

“The loose way in which the cases adduced were described in the Report, and the small number of those of which it was asserted (by Mr. Whitlaw, or the Committee, we know not which), that effectual relief had been obtained, *only six* were sufficient reasons for considering it unsatisfactory. Besides, I had access to know that one of these cases was lumbar abscess, with carious vertebræ, and it is sufficiently known to the profession, that in such cases nature sometimes operates a cure. In the other five cases, we are left completely in the dark what was the precise nature of the disease, or in what stage it was when taken under treatment. The allusions made to many more alleged cures were so vague and general as to form no ground for conclusion whatever.

“The statement of unsuccessful cases is quite essential to enable us to estimate the efficacy of any mode of treatment. For any thing we know, the six cases cured may be only a few of several hundreds treated without benefit. The Report takes no notice of any such cases, and therefore would convey the impression that none such exist. Yet it is consistent with my knowledge, that many have been treated for weeks and months, many months, at great expense, without any benefit. These persons are of course dissatisfied, but they are never once mentioned.

“It is surely nothing more than a just demand on the part of the public, that a fair statement of the cases treated, cure or no cure, be laid before them. They have also a right to be satisfied, that the person who takes descriptions of these cases, be qualified to say what the nature of the disease is, and what the chances of cure, under judicious professional treatment. They must also be assured that such person has no interest to support Mr. Whitlaw, and no bias in any direction but towards truth. No such course as this has been adopted. What have we instead? We have scars and assertions; vague assertions; assertions of persons whose interest is involved in the practice; or of the Committee, who, however good their motives may be, cannot be supposed qualified to judge on medical subjects; or of patients, who are equally unable to judge, especially in their own case.

“So much for the Report.

“The sophistical and inconclusive mode of reasoning adopted by some of the speakers in favour of the plan, and the high colouring of facts by others, are ill calculated to produce any favourable impression; as witness the following selections:—

“Mr. Moore, M. P. declared that ‘he had seen and judged for himself.’ Now, will this gentleman say that he is qualified to judge in the case? Can he give the diagnostic marks of Scrofula, or of Cancer, as distinct from other diseases? If not, why does he recommend the public to resort in dangerous complaints to a person of whose abilities he is no judge? He virtually recommends the treat-



ment, though he states that his uniform answer to all inquiries was, ‘Come and judge for yourself.’ Now, to tell medical men so, were well enough; if, after they did come, they were allowed sufficient opportunities: but to hold such language to the public, is in truth to say,—I have judged of a subject, respecting which I am not competent to decide,—come and do likewise. The result of this judgment is as might be expected. He recommends the medicine as safe, on the ground that it is a mere vegetable infusion.

“Now, as one speaker (Mr. Drummond) justly remarked at the meeting, ‘What else than a vegetable infusion is tincture of hemlock or hyosciamus,—two of our most deadly poisons: yet precisely on the same grounds might they be recommended as safe.’ This speaker (Mr. Moore) declared also, ‘that his advice to Mr. Whitlaw was, by no means to discover the composition of his medicine, for he had a right to enjoy the benefit of it by concealment!’ Now, I would beg leave to ask, where are those charitable and humane feelings to suffering mankind, so much spoken of and professed? The declaration of this speaker to the public is this,—I believe Mr. Whitlaw can cure the most desperate cases of scrofula and cancer—I believe that many persons are now dying under these complaints in different parts of this kingdom—yet I advise him to keep his remedy secret—for what end?—to enrich himself. This reasoning, transferred into life and generally acted upon, would it not eradicate every liberal, and humane, and Christian principle from the bosom, and engraft in the site of the finer feelings of our nature, the shoots of the most obdurate and griping avarice? Then would every valuable improvement in the arts and sciences be husbanded with jealous care within the contracted sphere of its most illiberal discoverer, instead of ranging the broad sweep of civilized society, diffusing with unrestrained generosity its pregnant blessings on humanity. Then would charity and pity be banished from our land, and the voice of imploring misery would be issued forth in vain. Famine and disease would do their work of death with impunity; for the means of relief would be pertinaciously withheld from each and every one who could not contribute to enrich the possessor. The very hinges of society would be unloosed. To talk of Charity—to *proclaim* your petty cases of gratis supply of medicines, when such a general principle is acknowledged, defended, and acted upon, were surely an abuse of terms. ‘Charity vaunteth not herself.’

“Sir Gerard Noel put a question at the Meeting—‘What harm would an Asylum do?’ A most *sophistical* mode indeed of recommending a public Institution. Our inquiry is, What good will it do? If none, why propose it? The harm it would do depends altogether on the judgment with which it is conducted. If it be judiciously managed, no one will get the superintendence of it who does not advance proof of his being best qualified. If Mr. Whitlaw has not adduced such proof, why intrust him with it? What harm

would there be in this? Much. It would exhibit him to the public as qualified to treat diseases, when he is not.

“ Dr. Thornton being a Member of the Royal College of Physicians, we would have expected something like scientific investigation and grounds for conclusion from him: we would have expected that he would have been able to adduce a great number of cases accurately described, and the progress of their cure carefully watched, as well as some account of the *modus operandi* of the medicine; that each termination would be faithfully recorded, and thus the efficacy of the medicines set beyond a doubt, bearing regard to every source of fallacy which might derange or modify the result. What do we find in place of this? A declaration of his own conviction of the efficacy of the remedies, and on what grounds?—‘ Because vegetable remedies in general possess strong powers—because vaccination was known to peasantry before its introduction into medical practice—because Dr. Carmichael Smith had introduced the use of fumigation (not knowing it was the Count de Morveau)—because old wives had been known to make cures. Therefore, it is wrong to shut our eyes against new discoveries.’ We would ask this Gentleman, where is the proof that this is a new discovery? Till this be adduced who can be accused of shutting his eyes against it? But if this proof be not adduced, is not the conclusion somewhat likely, that he among others may be shutting his eyes under a blind credulity? He mentions one case of a patient given up by a Dispensary, cured by Mr. Whitlaw. Now, we have heard such general statements before, not only with regard to public hospitals, but also of some of our most respectable surgeons; yet have on inquiry at these persons found them incorrect, so that we are now somewhat sceptical. What Dispensary was it—what Surgeon gave up the cases as hopeless—what is the name and address of the cured? These are essential questions.

“ This speaker asks, ‘ Is it probable that a medical gentleman would have confided his son to Mr. Whitlaw’s care, unless convinced,’ &c. Are we then to rest *our* belief on the probability of what a medical man *might* do, merely because he is a *medical* man? Truly this laxity of thinking may suit a mind unable to restrain itself from pursuing vague analogies suggested by a confused jumble of facts and opinions, and whose conclusions are invariably deranged by each successive revolution of the heterogeneous mass; but truth requires a close investigation for its elucidation. It is truly ludicrous to see the words ‘ tea, coffee, bread, cooked meats, beer, wine, spirits, milk, hung beef, mutton, cabbages, Iceland moss, jelly, instructive amusements,’ &c. suggest themselves in uncouth concatenation to a mind feeling itself called upon to adduce proof on a subject it could never have investigated.

“ Mr. Harris.—We would beg leave to ask this Gentleman the following questions: ‘ He sees the necessity for the proposed Asylum from the almost universal prevalence of the diseases, and from their invariably baffling the skill of medical men.’ Now, does he not see



the necessity for proving this last assertion, and also of proving as a preliminary step to putting the hospital under Mr. Whitlaw's care, that 'these diseases do not baffle him? He says he believes they do not. What are his grounds? If they are just ones, the statement of them will convince all others. We ask him on what grounds and qualifications he holds himself entitled to sit in judgment on the medical profession, and to pronounce them all so full of prejudice as to oppose improvement? What is the extent of his medical knowledge in comparison with that of those he thus judges and condemns? Nothing.

"He thinks 'the chance of affording relief to cases dismissed from the hospitals a sufficient inducement to institute an Asylum.' On the same principle Dr. Solomon should have had an asylum for the administration of the 'Balm of Gilcad,' for we had many well-authenticated cures of *consumption* by this remedy. The Beaume de Vie, as can be proved most incontrovertibly, produces great relief in a particular species of headache, yet who would institute an asylum for it on such a ground? On the same principle might a fortune be invested in the lottery.

"The succeeding ipse dixits of this speaker on medical points are entitled to as much attention as the opinions of the pannel at the bar respecting his own case, when called upon to show his innocence.

"With regard to Mr. Whitlaw's acquirements, and the valuable information he possesses, and his important discoveries, we see as much evidence in favour of the one as of the other—his own assertions, and the assertions of persons who must admit themselves to be no judges. The supposition that diseases deeply rooted in the constitution could be eradicated almost instantaneously, has been made by no one at the meeting but the speaker himself, though the assertion has been made on other occasions by Mr. Whitlaw, on what grounds and for what ends we leave others to judge.

"*The Rev. Mr. Fletcher.*—The powers of this Gentleman in describing diseases, we can estimate sufficiently by quoting an assertion he made at the meeting: 'that he had seen one case in which the arteries and veins of the head were wholly exposed to view.' A person who thus allows himself to be carried away by imagination, is ill calculated for accurate investigation. A mathematical theorem does not more widely differ from a poetical canto, than does a declamatory harangue from a scientific description. It is the latter we want.

"*Rev. H. Thomson.*—This Gentleman said, 'that the cases adduced were not picked cases.' If this means any thing at all, it surely means that all the cases Mr. Whitlaw has treated since last meeting have been produced, with the result. Yet there was one Gentleman present at the meeting whose child Mr. Whitlaw promised to cure of a white swelling in a short time, who has been under his treatment for four months, at great expense, but who is not in the least better. A great number of other unsuccessful cases have

come within my knowledge. Add to this, I have as yet seen no further evidence of cures than allegations of persons not qualified to judge what the diseases were. Extensive inquiry at the patients' has not convinced me that the medicines commonly given by Mr. Whitlaw had any other effect than purgative. I have seen the same remedies given in all cases, however different, viz. palsy, apoplectic tendency, cancer, scrofula, necrosis, hæmoptoe, dyspepsia, dropsy, consumption, hypochondria, &c. viz. No. 1, and the vapour-bath; the same positive promises of cure within a limited time to all without exception; the most trifling tumours denominated dreadful cancers, and that in direct contradiction to the opinions of our best surgeons. With such facts before me, and many other such, how could I be satisfied with the Report read at the Meeting?

“ The loose declamation adduced there, so far from supplying its deficiencies in the requisites for conviction, furnished the strongest reasons for considering it unsatisfactory, as emanating from the same persons who drew it up.

“ It still remains therefore as much a desideratum as ever, to receive positive incontrovertible proof of the justness of Mr. Whitlaw's pretensions to cure cancer and scrofula. Let us recollect that we involve ourselves in a heavy responsibility, if upon loose grounds we hold him forth to the alarmed and too credulous victims of these distressing complaints as worthy of having their lives intrusted to his care. We must not suffer names to mislead us. But if we see any man, however respectable, believing and recommending, yet unable to show substantial grounds for believing, we must (there is no alternative) conclude such a man to be either upright in his motives, but weak in his judgment; or, being strong in judgment, to be perverted in his principles. The Committee therefore are bound in duty to the public, as well as in vindication of themselves, and in justice to Mr. Whitlaw, to take such measures as will set his very broad pretensions in their just light. We must have no assertions—no declamation—no warmth of feeling—no liveliness of colouring; but correct scientific descriptions—and dispassionate, disinterested, authentic statements of facts—of the whole facts. When such are adduced it will be quite time enough to charge the faculty with prejudice; but till then the supporters of such incredible assertions are themselves liable to weightier imputations. In bringing these remarks to a close, I cannot but state that no one would more rejoice than myself to see a remedy introduced capable of curing cancer and scrofula. The failure on Mr. Whitlaw's part to make good his pretensions to such a discovery, so far from giving me cause for exultation, would, for the sake of suffering humanity, give me sincere sorrow.

“ I am, Sir,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ A. RENNIE, Surgeon.



"I would not have troubled you with these remarks, had it not been that I have had opportunities of witnessing more unsuccessful cases than any other has acknowledged; and what I stated on this score at the meeting, has been withheld from the public. Besides, I was prevented at the meeting from stating my reasons in detail, or from showing the inconclusive reasoning of those who advocated the other side, on the ground that I was opposing the object of the meeting, and therefore *MUST BE OUT OF ORDER*. My object was not to oppose charity, but, by the developement of the truth I knew, to ascertain what was charity. I am still as willing as ever to acknowledge evidence in favour of the medicine, if presented to me; but I like to examine 'both sides of the shield.'"

*Curzon Street, May Fair.*

A few days after this I complied with the solicitations of the Committee to give them a meeting for calm, and, as I conceived, private explanation. At this interview Mr. Harris appeared, who explained to me that he was not the person who delivered the speech attributed to him in the newspaper of the 16th. I offered him a public explanation, if required. In a day or two I received from him the following letter:

*"Saville House, Leicester Square,  
July 27, 1822.*

"SIR,

"Respecting the misrepresentations contained in your letter to the Editor of the Morning Post of 24th instant, it remains for me to request that you will in the same paper explain the mistake you have fallen into in attributing to *me* sentiments which I did not utter, particularly as it regards the medical profession, for whom I have the greatest respect.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"*To A. RENNIE, Esq.  
&c. &c. &c.*"

"JOHN HARRIS."

With this request, I, in the Morning Post of the 6th of August, so far complied as to publish the following letter:

*"To the Editor of the Morning Post.*

"SIR,—In, my letter to you of the 24th, respecting the Committee who patronize Mr. Charles Whitlaw, in his pretensions to cure scrofula and cancer, there were several typographical errors arising chiefly from the indistinctness of my manuscript. For instance, the words 'one gentleman,' &c. were intended to be omitted, if the names of the speakers were mentioned. The only misinterpretation of consequence, however, which an intelligent reader cannot

correct for himself is, where Mr. Drummond's name is introduced. From making a new paragraph here, the passage conveys the impression that he was the person who advised Mr. Whitlaw to conceal his medicine. No one who knows Mr. Drummond will believe him capable of such an illiberal piece of conduct. The opinion he expressed at the meeting was quite in unison with my own, and directly opposed to that of the Committee: 'That there was not one particle of evidence in favour of Mr. Whitlaw's pretensions, which could satisfy any mind accustomed to accurate inquiry.'

"I have received a letter from John Harris, Esq. Leicester Square, informing me that he never uttered the sentiments respecting the medical profession which I animadverted upon in his name. If Mr. Harris will take the trouble to look into your paper of the 16th, he will perceive that the mistake of attributing to him the speech of another gentleman, did not originate with me, but with the authors of the account then published. To them, therefore, he must apply for an explanation, if he wishes 'the saddle to be put on the right horse.' My remarks were directed against these sentiments, because they appeared to me egregiously out of place, and I neither knew nor cared who the person was that uttered them. Had I known Mr. Harris personally, I would have perceived the mistake, and I would not have suffered it to pass unrectified.

"Now that I do recognise Mr. Harris, I must do him the justice to say, that his speech at the meeting was upon the whole the most rational delivered on the same side of the question; it at least induced me to give him (as well as some other gentlemen, whose erroneous statements I could not let pass unrectified) credit for the most benevolent intentions in supporting the views of the Committee. These concessions by no means imply that I approve of the course he has adopted in recommending the institution of an Asylum for Mr. Whitlaw. I think him decidedly wrong; and it would give me much pleasure if any arguments or facts I could lay before him would convince him of his error. He stated at the meeting, after hearing the Report, that a *prima facie* case had been made out: that this case, if not disproved by the medical profession, or by us (Mr. Drummond and myself), the opponents of the scheme, was sufficient to justify the institution of an Asylum. These, if I recollect rightly, were his sentiments. The fallacy of this reasoning is most glaring. There is no analogy whatever between medical practice, and the practice at the bar. There is in medicine no such thing admissible as a (one) *prima facie* case to warrant a broad conclusion: supposing there were, and that the reasoning of this gentleman is applicable, where would it lead us? A *prima facie* case of a well-attested cure by Mr. Whitlaw is made out. An old wife (as what grandam is there who has not her cures to boast of?) brings forward one of her *extraordinary recoveries*, and stoutly defies us of the faculty to wrest from her the credit of it. Would not this good lady be as well entitled to have an asylum put under her superintend-

ence as Mr. Whitlaw? The fact however is, that not even one *prima facie* case has ever been made out by the Committee, at least in a manner satisfactory to me; and with the information I possess, respecting Mr. Whitlaw's mode of treatment, and the effects of it, it will require a vast deal more than one solitary hit-or-miss instance of success to justify my assent to intrusting *him* with an Asylum.

"As it is of great importance, that the afflicted should be informed where they can apply for relief with safety and certainty—that the credulous should be made aware of the difference between true merit and impudent pretension, I conceive it a duty I owe to the public to examine into Mr. Whitlaw's mode of treatment, so far as I can obtain opportunity. Did he stand unsupported in his pretensions, he were less worthy of notice; but patronized as he is, by so many persons of prominent influence, it is an object of serious importance to arrive at the truth. In proportion to the respectability of his patrons, will be the mischief done to society, if he has no merit to deserve confidence. Whatever may be the result, is a matter of indifference to me, excepting so far as the health of the afflicted part of the community is concerned.

"My endeavours shall be, to carry on the inquiry with a mind divested of prejudice; to state facts with candour; to point at legitimate conclusions.

"As recent circumstances have occurred to prevent my farther attendance at Mr. Whitlaw's exhibition for the purpose of investigation, I earnestly and respectfully request those who have experienced the effects of his treatment on themselves, to favour me with the result, whether beneficial or otherwise, that I may lay it before the public. The names of those who communicate their cases, shall be strictly concealed if required, and every precaution taken to avoid any exposure which might involve individuals in any embarrassment of an unpleasant nature.

"The inquiry is one of public utility, and in no respect inconsistent with the strictest justice to Mr. Whitlaw; accordingly, in obtaining from the lips of the patients the numerous statements of cases I now possess, I have invariably met with a candour and liberality truly expressive of the humane desire to render their personal experience conducive to the welfare of their suffering brethren of mankind.

"By inserting this communication you will much oblige,

"Sir, your most obedient servant,

"A. RENNIE, Surgeon.

"14, Queen Street, May Fair."

On the 10th of August I published the following case.

"To the Editor of the Morning Post.

"SIR,—Having made bold, publicly, to call in question the propriety of patronizing Mr. Charles Whitlaw, in his pretensions to cure scrofula and cancer, it is time now that I lay before the



public some of my grounds for so doing. If the respectable gentlemen who recommend his treatment, and who, under the professed conviction of its utility, are so eager to institute an Asylum under his superintendence, feel themselves able to controvert my arguments—to invalidate the authenticity of my statements of facts—or to bring forward such a body of facts to bear against them, as will convince any rational and scientific and unprejudiced mind, that Mr. Whitlaw does possess means of eradicating these dangerous diseases which the faculty do not, I will then, for the good of mankind, and in justice to them, give him credit to the full amount of the merit implied by the evidence adduced.

“My principal objections to the scheme of an Asylum have been founded on the want of this evidence, either in favour of the efficacy of the medicines used, or the qualifications of the prescriber; and if, in addition to this want of evidence in their favour, I can adduce cases forming direct evidence against them, my objections will, I hope, be fully justified, as founded on substantial grounds. I beg leave, *in limine*, to premise that I ask the belief of no man on my own assertions, unless they are supported by the testimony of other credible individuals; that my reasonings I will at once retract, if shown to be inconclusive; and that the cases I adduce I am ready to authenticate to the satisfaction of any disinterested and candid inquirer.

“Assertions may be false, reasoning may be sophistical, but facts speak for themselves. Nothing is more enlightening to the public than a plain statement of facts; nothing more formidable to the impudent, boasting, lying pretender; nothing more grateful to an honourable character, conscious, at once, of truth and of merit. I feel satisfied, therefore, that I perform an acceptable service to the public, by describing, in a popular way, a few cases calculated to illustrate the nature of Mr. Whitlaw’s pretensions, the extent of his skill, and the efficacy of his medicines. I mean no injustice to him. I can do him none while I am guided by truth. The disclosures I make may excite an evolution of spleen or enmity. I am mental chemist enough to draw the legitimate conclusion from such a phenomenon, viz. that such a product can only proceed from a mind in which the moral principles are undergoing the putrefactive fermentation.

“My reason for being so diffuse in the following statement is, that I write not for the profession, but for the public; and to render myself intelligible, I must dispense with technical terms, though I thereby sacrifice brevity.

“Mr. S. a respectable gentleman, 30 years of age, of an athletic make, and in good general health, in April last, while mounting his horse, had given himself a twist or strain. Next day he perceived that one of the glands in the groin was considerably swelled, with little pain, but some redness. No care being taken, the swelling gradually increased during ten days. He



found it then necessary to apply for medical aid. The tumour was treated by a respectable practitioner for nearly three weeks; but the patient not being aware of the necessity of avoiding exercise, the swelling continued obstinate. Being impatient to get better, that he might return to his profession, the patient was induced, by the pressing solicitations of one of the Committee, to apply to Mr. Whitlaw.

“Mr. Whitlaw declared to the patient that his case was *a cancer*, exactly *similar to that of a Captain Cummins*, whom he *said he had cured*; that medical men, though they might know what the complaint was, were *unable to cure it*, because they *had not the means*; that it would shortly spread over the whole thigh, unless it were checked; and he *promised to cure it in a short time*.

“Patient was then asked a few questions as to his case, and the answers were written down in a book. For this *a guinea* was charged. The vapour-bath was ordered, a bottle of No. 1, and an ointment for the tumour. In spite of these means, however, the tumour went on, and at the end of a fortnight it burst, discharging purulent matter in considerable quantities for a few days, during which the same treatment was continued. The opening closed up; but the swelling went on increasing in size. The heat of the tumour was in some degree diminished by the vapour-bath; but it at the same time produced considerable weakness. No. 1 had merely a purgative effect; the ointment no effect at all. These means were persevered in regularly for one month longer (making six weeks in all), without benefit; on the contrary, the swelling got worse, and that notwithstanding *exercise*, which was recommended to *remove it*. Mr. S. was now advised by Mr. Whitlaw to go to Margate, where a complete cure was promised in two or three weeks. Patient continued at Margate a fortnight, still continuing the same treatment, at the end of which time was worse than ever.

“In this state was Mr. S. when shown to me by Mr. Whitlaw for the purpose of obtaining my opinion as to his complaint. I found him full of anxiety, being absent from a very extensive business in London, which required his superintendence; also impressed with the idea that he laboured under a dreadful disease. After examination, I declared my opinion, that the disease was not a cancer; that it was of a very simple nature (not apparently specific); and that by a judicious application of discutient means it might be cured in a few days. I thought pressure the most advisable treatment. The patient was much satisfied with this declaration. Mr. Whitlaw went away to get some medicine. In his absence, Mr. S. told me he doubted much if Mr. Whitlaw understood his case; that he would give him another fortnight's trial, and if not better, would apply to me. I answered, that I could not interfere with Mr. Whitlaw's patient. Mr. Whitlaw, previous to going way, told patient he had taken No. 1 too long, and he would bring him a bottle No. 2.

On his return, however, he brought No. 1, and on being shown the mistake, he said it was of no consequence.

“Coming to London next day in the steam-boat, I was surprised to see the patient. He told me he had resolved to quit Mr. Whitlaw, and to take the first surgical advice in London. If it corresponded with mine, he would be easy in his mind.

“In about a fortnight after my return to London, I was requested by Mr. S. to attend one of his female domestics, supposed to be in a consumption. He then told me that he had consulted Mr. Brodie, whose opinion as to the nature of his case coincided with my own. By his advice the tumour had been treated, since his return, with a discutient plaister; from this he had derived great benefit, the swelling being much diminished; but, from taking exercise, it again increased. I recommended pressure with rest; pressure was applied, the swelling gradually diminished, by the sixth day it was nearly gone, and notwithstanding much exercise, contrary to my directions, it has not returned.

“This case gives room for some reflection. Mr. Whitlaw declared the complaint to be cancer; medical men declared it was not. The result has confirmed *their* opinion. If such be the nature of Mr. Whitlaw’s *cancers*, it is easy to account for his occasionally stumbling on a cure. Mr. Whitlaw asserted that medical men had not the means of curing *this* case, but that he had. The result has shown that he had neither the means nor the ability to cure it; but that medical men had various means equally efficient. He promised a positive cure in a limited time: after two months the disease was getting worse under his hands. Mr. S. has suffered in his mind by false alarm and anxiety; in his business by two months’ absence; and in his purse to the extent of about 14*l.* 14*s.* paid to Mr. Whitlaw, besides other expenses to a greater amount. It is my own opinion, as well as that of other medical men, that his tumour, if judiciously treated at first, would have speedily yielded.

“The case of consumption alluded to had also been under Mr. Whitlaw for a considerable period, and will be an interesting illustration of the effects of his treatment so warmly recommended by the Committee. I shall keep a faithful journal of her case since she came under my care, as well as of several others now in progress towards cure.

“With respect, I am, Sir,

“Your most obedient servant,

“A. RENNIE, Surgeon.

“Queen Street, May Fair.”

The following letter has not been hitherto published. It sufficiently explains itself, and was intended for the same paper.

MR. EDITOR,—I am sorry that necessity compels me to obtrude myself personally on public attention; but an attack made on my



private character, has been, I find, industriously circulated by some friends of Mr. Whitlaw, for the purpose of throwing into discredit the statements regarding his pretensions which I have laid before the public. Misrepresentations of my conduct can, I hope, operate to my disadvantage only on the minds of those who know me not. Proceeding from Mr. Whitlaw, they were beneath my notice; but as, in the present case, they have been made by persons of influence and apparent respectability, they will have their weight. It is, therefore, of consequence to me, and also to the public, so far as my testimony goes in the pending investigation, that I state facts as they stand. I have not the slightest objection to let my conduct be judged by public (enlightened) opinion; but let it be fairly represented. If it shall appear croneous, I hope the pride of a false etiquette shall never prevent me from acknowledging my errors, that I may correct them in future.

Soon after the meeting in the City of London Tavern, I received a request from the Committee to give them a meeting for explanation. This I declined, on the ground that the *onus probandi* lay upon them. Some time thereafter I was invited to renew my visits to Mr. Whitlaw's exhibition of his patients; but previously to my doing so, the Committee desired a meeting for *calm explanation*. With the view of obtaining farther opportunities of investigation, I was induced to comply with their request, on the proviso that the absence of feeling, and altercation, and illiberal language, should be guaranteed.

Notwithstanding this stipulation, the meeting was the most boisterous I ever encountered. Calm explanation was out of the question. In place of candour and liberality, I found the warmest party feelings; Mr. Whitlaw, his satellites, and the Committee, on the one side; myself on the other. The Secretary and the President, among others, assumed the office of accusation, bringing forward charges I was obliged flatly to deny as entirely unfounded. The same persons immediately afterwards sat in judgment. My longer stay could serve no good purpose. Standing, as I did, between the public and such a party, concession on my part was quite inconsistent with the public interest: explanation from them was indispensable. I therefore retired. Next day the following letter was sent me, which shows the real object for which the meeting was desired.

“ *Asylum for the Reception and Cure of Scrofulous and Cancerous Cases, under the Direction of Mr. Whitlaw.*

“ At a Meeting of the Committee, held at Mr. Whitlaw's house, 97, Great Russel Street, July 26, 1822, it was unanimously resolved,

“ That it appears Mr. Rennie has made private visits to Mr. Whitlaw's patients, and pronounced to them opinions against the efficacy of Mr. Whitlaw's medicines and treatment in their particular



cases: that he has done so without communicating the same to this Committee; and that he has this evening insisted on a right to give opinions to the patients whenever he may conceive them under an error in confidence on medical treatment.

"That such conduct cannot be tolerated as honourable on any principles on which society can be regulated.

"Extracted, &c.

"JAMES MILLAR, Secretary."

This resolution was founded on a charge I had flatly denied; it was inclosed in the following letter to me from Mr. Millar.

"SIR,—I cannot help expressing great regret, that it should have been considered necessary to adopt the resolutions which I have extracted from the minutes, and have been desired herewith to transmit to you.

"You are in possession of my own opinion, and I sincerely regret you have not been convinced, that the line of conduct you have pursued should have naturally produced discord, and could never arrive at any satisfactory result.

"If any thing were wanting to show that you are not likely to have given due attention to the investigation of the cases under Mr. Whitlaw's care, it is amply supplied by the strange misrepresentations contained in your letter in the Morning Post. The Report, and also the observations of the speakers, are nearly all mis-stated. Some points I consider as founded only in the inventive powers of your own mind.

"Your composition is far from clear, if not greatly defective. Whether, after naming a speaker, you call him a gentleman by way of sneer, or to distinguish him from a lady, is not very material; but, on the whole, if you wish to support your credit on the score of talents, I would recommend, before you publish again, to get your essays revised by any good corrector of the press.

"After all, I am inclined to think you do possess useful talents; and hope you will be more wisely directed in your future course than in this instance. For I assure you, that although, on the present occasion, I cannot reconcile your conduct with my views of propriety, yet I sincerely wish you well through life, and shall be at all times happy to hear of it.

"I remain, &c.

"JAMES MILLAR."

These are the sentiments of a well-meaning man, but of one who is labouring under a grievous delusion: engaged in supporting what he does not understand, he thinks he is advocating the cause of truth and of humanity. The cases I adduce will show the reverse. My answer was as follows:

“ Mr. MILLAR.

“ Dear Sir,—I received your letter with the resolution of the Committee. Your own sentiments towards me are, on the whole, as amicable and friendly as in the circumstances I could expect. The admonitions you give shall receive *due* weight. ‘*Fas sit et ab inimico doceri.*’ I should feel regret if this adage were applicable in its full extent, as I would willingly be an enemy to no individual, especially to one whose character and motives are worthy of respect. What lies between you and me is a wide diversity of opinion on a point, not of individual, but of public interest. Now, if you were to lay the evidence which has convinced you before me, I pledge myself to view it without prejudice, and either to embrace your opinion, or give my reasons for not doing so. This is a pretty sure road to the truth, which it is my desire to arrive at.

“ There is one bar in the way, which is the resolution of the Committee, to which you assent. Whatever may be the views of the Committee as to my conduct, formed, as I know them to be, from such a partial representation of it as amounts to misrepresentation, I am not a bit the less, on that account, disposed to give Mr. Whitlaw whatever credit may be his due on a thorough investigation. Having no interest of a private nature to serve, I desire to divest myself of animosity and party spirit altogether; and though a fancied insult at the time may make me feel, I endeavour to make feeling transitory when the great objects of truth and justice are to be aimed at.

“ You blame me for want of candour in my investigations. Whatever you may think, I have the satisfaction to find, by daily letters of thanks, that others think differently, and that on fairer grounds than any you possess. The very information on which you found your judgment was procured by a breach of candour; for I now find, that individuals have been uttering feigned sentiments to get me to speak, that they might retail what I said in scales not very accurately poized. Against such treacherous conduct I had this security, that I spoke to every one what I knew to be truth; and my sentiments in general, respecting Mr. Whitlaw, have been stated as freely to himself as to others, when the occasion required. I have no need to mince matters either with him or the Committee, or with any other. It is always an unfavourable symptom when the plain truth is unpalatable; and it has always appeared unaccountable to me, how any expression from me of disapprobation should have produced animosity in Mr. Whitlaw. If he had possessed the ‘*mens sibi conscia recti*,’ he would have encouraged rather than endeavoured to prevent my farther inquiries; and he would have been anxious to lay before me stronger and incontrovertible evidence. His not doing so, in the circumstances, was proof he had it not to show; for he knew it would have been for his interest to make me a convert. If pecuniary considerations would have converted me, they were enforced sufficiently strongly. I would wish to be above such, unless in connexion with fair dealing.

"I have only to regret, for the sake of truth and of the credulous part of society, that you and I should be possessed of information so very different, both in kind and degree; and that there seems now no likelihood of either being the convert of the other, chiefly from want of opportunities.

"The resolution of your Committee is strongly indicative of the extreme weakness of the cause they support. Discourage the inquiries of one who was impartial, and rather disposed to favour their pretensions! Endeavour to throw a slur on his character, to weaken in this way his testimony against them, when it was too powerful on any other score to be shaken!! If by evidence they would destroy it, surely it were a mode much more efficient, much more worthy of candid and liberal supporters of truth, and much more conducive to the public welfare.

"Your criticisms against my style should have been levelled against the printer. Sneering I cannot condescend to: the blunders of the type-setter have rendered some passages quite unintelligible to me; yet I heard some one of your Committee read one of these passages as if he appreciated every word!!!

"I cannot help requesting you, for your own sake, to open your eyes on facts, and be convinced: with the benevolent motives you possess, conviction on just grounds is all that is necessary to steer you right.

"I am, Sir, &c.

14, *Queen Street, May Fair.*

"A. RENNIE, Surgeon."

The above resolution of the Committee were unworthy of public notice, had it not been made the foundation of false and illiberal imputations on my character: whether my conduct may appear honourable or not, in the eyes of a Committee, influenced by their taking a direct part against me, I am not disposed to abate one inch of my right to act as I have done in the cases where I gave my opinions to Mr. Whitlaw's patients; nor, with the views of professional duty I have imbibed, do I now see that I could conscientiously have acted otherwise. A few cases will at once exhibit my conduct, the principles by which I was guided, and the treatment of Mr. Whitlaw, which I thought, and still think, absurd and inefficacious, and more than that, most dangerous. I never will be guilty of silently seeing the lives of my fellow-creatures sported with, and experimented upon, to fill the pockets of any individual; or to fulfil the erroneous views of any person, or set of persons, whatsoever: if I lift not the warning voice when I see a fellow-creature in danger, his death be upon my head: I therefore expect I shall not be condemned, till I have fully stated my cases.

Case 2. A gentleman was shown to me at Margate by Mr. Whitlaw, labouring under a swelling in the scrotum. Mr. Whitlaw told me that he had been endeavouring for some time to remove this swelling by his medicine, and had no doubt of doing so. I could not



help smiling, though I felt shocked : I said it was an hydrocele, and that an operation would cure the patient in a few days. This patient having resolved to go to London for farther advice, I next day met him in the steam-boat, and finding him exceedingly alarmed and anxious, I said what I could to convince him how safe and effectual an operation was if properly done. Had I consented to perform the operation myself, interested motives might have been attributed to me. I therefore recommended him to apply to a good anatomist, accustomed to this operation, and without fear put himself under his hands ; that in a few days he would be cured : but the idea of discussing such a tumour by the vapour-bath, as Mr. Whitlaw proposed, or internal medicines, was absurd. The bath might sweat the whole blood out of his body without curing the disease.

A few days ago I received the following letter from this gentleman.

“ SIR,

“ You will no doubt recollect my being under Mr. Whitlaw for a swelling in the scrotum, and your examination of it. Having since undergone an operation for the same, I therefore feel it my duty to inform you that every word you told me respecting it has proved correct ; and that Mr. Whitlaw’s *indurated substance of a greenish cheesy nature, formed by taking too great a quantity of acids, his sort of, or next kin to scrofula, has turned out to be* nothing more or less *than water*, as Mr. Headington the operator stated, and as experience has proved, a clear case of hydrocele. With many thanks for the candid advice you gave me,

“ I remain, Sir,

“ Yours respectfully, &c.

“ J. D.”

To A. RENNIE, Esq.

The feeling breathed through this letter is a pretty potent antidote to any poison with which calumny might endeavour to wound my character, if a consciousness of having done my duty were not sufficient to neutralize the energy of the virus. Here is one individual rescued from false alarm and real danger, restored to health of body and peace of mind ; pecuniary considerations are scarcely worth taking into the account, yet he is *no loser* in this respect. I must defer some other more striking cases of the same nature for another paper, and am,

“ SIR,

“ Yours respectfully,

14, Queen Street, May Fair.

“ A. RENNIE, Surgeon.”

The circumstance which gave rise more particularly to the censure of the Committee on my conduct was as follows.

A most respectable member of the Committee was so far convinced by a few strong facts I pointed out to him, of the necessity for inquiry,

that he agreed to give me every assistance in his power in this office. He offered to introduce me to a young lady, a particular friend of his, at the time under Mr. Whitlaw's care, that I might ascertain the effects of his treatment in her particular case. Accordingly, no sooner was I introduced to this lady in a medical capacity, than the conversation turned on her own case. She explained to me all her symptoms, and expressed anxiety to know my opinion of her case, and the treatment she was undergoing. Her disease was a scaly eruption on the face, which had continued obstinate for some years, notwithstanding the first medical advice. I explained to her the difficulty of saying any thing positively as to a cure of her complaint; that I had before frequently met with the same variety of disease; that I had seen the most judicious prescriptions applied for months, yet in vain; and yet, after all, the complaint disappear under the most simple applications, no one could tell how. For instance, one case I had seen treated for many months without effect, by the ablest surgeons, yet it yielded in a few days to the oxide of manganese. She then asked my opinion as to Mr. Whitlaw's treatment: I replied, the vapour-bath was very likely in her case to do some good, by removing the scales in which the eruption terminated, and also by diminishing the irritability of the skin: that Mr. Whitlaw's medicine might possibly possess new powers, calculated to do her good; but I had not yet discovered them, nor, in fact, that it operated in any other way than as an aperient. She then was very anxious for me to say to her what were the ingredients of Mr. Whitlaw's medicine. I told her it was impossible to say, as even chemical analysis could not detect the original vegetables from which a mixed infusion was made. I was requested, however, to try what she was taking by the taste. Upon doing so, I said I was certain there was a considerable quantity of common Epsom salts in it. There appeared to me a resinous flavour, and a sweet taste like molasses. This was the substance not the words of my conversation, which I conceived to be of a private nature, as to mutual friends; what then was my surprise, when I found it converted into the false and ungenerous charge, that I had gone to Mr. Whitlaw's patients *privately*, and had declared his treatment in this lady's case inefficacious, and his medicine to be nothing else than *Epsom salts, turpentine, and molasses?* That I had also recommended my own treatment in preference to Mr. Whitlaw's, which was the yellow wash; a substance never named by me? Yet this is the foundation of the resolution of the Committee above alluded to. Upon stating these things confidentially to one of Mr. Whitlaw's warmest friends, a member and office-bearer of the Committee, his remark was, that by stating such opinions I had "spoiled a case," as the patient would not likely continue the treatment. Let me ask,—spoil a case of what?—of chemical experiment upon dead matter? nay, but a case of *experimenting* upon the *life* and *health* of a human being! Truly, if this be dishonourable on my part, honour



and justice have been strangely metamorphosed: if my dishonour shall turn out for the good of society, it is well.

The charge, that this visit was of a private nature, is entirely unfounded, as it was made at the request of, and in company with, one of the Committee; and the opinions I may have expressed, were made in the same undisguised manner as I had before been accustomed to do on every occasion.

The next case I adduce, however, is one in which I do acknowledge myself to have given an opinion against the propriety of Mr. Whitlaw's treatment, though, I believe, till this moment unknown to the Committee: and in respect of this case, I do insist upon my right to undeceive the patient, when under an error, in confidence, on medical treatment; and no censure of any Committee shall in future deter me from pursuing exactly the same course.

This was a gentleman who laboured under an affection resembling paralysis, connected, according to the opinion of some physicians, with retrocedent gout. The patient I met in the steam-boat going to Margate. He was then under Mr. Whitlaw's care. He described to me his symptoms; told me, that the most eminent physicians declared to him that he was not certain of his life a day, and he was exceedingly desirous to obtain my opinion as to the nature of his complaint. Mr. Whitlaw had, as usual, ordered him No. 1 and the vapour-bath. He was anxious to obtain my opinion as to these remedies. His complaints were, violent headache and giddiness, numbness of the hands and feet, so much so, that he could not sit in a church or warm room, without losing the power of his extremities; yet was this patient ordered into a vapour-bath of a heat near 100, and that for the professed object of sweating out of his body the *acrimony of the buttercup*. Every symptom indicated increased determination of blood to the head; and, in such circumstances, a rupture of a blood-vessel in the brain, from the highly accelerated circulation produced by the vapour-bath, which was exceedingly likely, were instant, inevitable death. In such a case, what was my duty? Had death happened, silence on my part were just as virtually criminal, as the actual recommendation of the practice, and I therefore hesitated not a moment to point out the danger to the patient.

There was another very similar case, in like manner put into the vapour-bath, though the patient had previously been told, by medical men, that she could not do so without hazard of her life. The patient escaped with life, and Mr. Whitlaw immediately made a boast of the circumstance. I conceive it unnecessary to expatiate longer on this resolution of the Committee, respecting my conduct in warning a person when his life is in danger.

The next case will show Mr. Whitlaw's *knowledge of cancer*. A person came to consult him at Margate, in my presence. The



disease was extensive ulceration of the uvula, tonsils, and back of the throat, extending up among the spongy bones of the nose, and reaching the integuments exteriorly to the nasal bones. In the nose there were two ulcerated holes, through which a probe might have been passed into the throat. The patient, naturally of a full and robust habit and florid complexion, was now of an unhealthy pale look, and had every symptom of a constitutional affection well known to medical men.

Mr. Whitlaw, as usual, declared this disease to be of a cancerous nature; and told the patient the nose could not be saved, but he could cure the complaint with this loss. He then recommended a bottle of his medicine, No. 1, and went to bring it. In his absence, the patient expressed much surprise that Mr. Whitlaw should have a medicine ready made up suitable for the case, expressed doubts whether he understood it, asked me if I thought it a cancer. My reply was, I was not at all connected with Mr. Whitlaw, I was only looking on at his practice in a medical capacity; that, in my opinion, this complaint was not a cancer; that, if not checked, it would no doubt carry away the nose, but that medical men had the means of preventing such a consequence.

I was solicited to undertake the case myself, which I of course refused. Patient then resolved to purchase a bottle of medicine, but not to use it, but to apply for medical advice elsewhere. On Mr. Whitlaw's return, I expressed my opinion that this disease was not cancer, and that it required mercury. This he would not admit. This patient I expected not to see again, as I returned to London next day. In a few days I was again requested to go to Margate by Mr. Whitlaw, to see his patients. On my return in the steam-boat I recognised the above designated person. Mr. Whitlaw told me, he had inquired about his medicine, but the person had not taken it. On my examining the disease, it was making rapid progress, and the nose was beginning to sink opposite where the bones were corroding away. The patient was in a state of much alarm, said had been advised by a friend not to come under Mr. Whitlaw's care, and solicited me to undertake the case. To this I could then have no objection. Accordingly I have attended this person for about a month. The ulceration in the throat and nose is completely stopped; the ulcerating apertures in the nose have healed over, leaving only a scar; the florid complexion has returned, the health of the patient is restored, and in a short time I expect there will scarcely remain a vestige of the complaint. I claim no merit in the treatment of this case at all—similar cases occur in medical practice every day. I state the case, merely to illustrate the treatment of Mr. Whitlaw, and his knowledge of what *cancer* is. This is the second of his cancers that has yielded, in a short time, to medical treatment. It is surely somewhat paradoxical if a person, who knows not a cancer when he sees it, can cure 95 out of 100 cases. The Committee may call it dishonourable in me, in this case, to have undeceived this patient at

the first interview. Had I not done so, the nose by this time would, in all probability, have been gone; and had the ulcerations in the throat taken the direction of the larynx, the patient's life was not worth a straw.

The following case of pulmonary consumption has been already alluded to.

R. —, age 24, about four months ago caught a severe cold with violent coughing and pain in the chest opposite the sternum. This cough continued some time, and gradually went off.—It shortly thereafter returned, though in a slighter degree, accompanied on one occasion with expectoration of a considerable quantity of bright red congealed blood. A blister was applied, and rest enjoined with some relief; but shortly after caught a fresh cold, which caused cough to return with hoarseness of voice. These symptoms, though better and worse, continued severe. About two months and a half ago, the cough being very distressing, applied to Mr. Whitlaw, who told her that in a short time he would make a complete cure of her, saying it was merely a sore throat, and that the lungs were free from the disease. Her case was then taken down, for which paid a guinea. Mr. Whitlaw then ordered, as usual, No. 1 and the vapour-bath. This treatment was continued for about two months. The vapour-bath at the time produced slight relief, but next day was always weaker in consequence. It was so often repeated, that patient was obliged to give it up, from the excessive weakness it produced. The other medicine produced no sensible effect except on one or two occasions slight purging. About a month ago was ordered to Margate by Mr. Whitlaw, where she has been since. Found the air much too keen, for after walking she always felt pain in the chest. Received no benefit from Mr. Whitlaw's treatment, but, on the contrary, health being in a declining state, has given him up. A medical man declared the case to be confirmed consumption.

Pulse 120. Cough incessant, especially during the night; much expectoration of purulent matter; appetite bad; sickness and vomiting after eating; breathing much affected; voice almost inaudible, from extreme hoarseness; occasional pain in the chest; sleeps very ill, and considerably emaciated.

In this state was this patient on the 1st of August, when she left off Mr. Whitlaw's medicines. She is now, by a different treatment, able to resume her former occupation. The pulse is under 90, quite steady. She seldom coughs, the expectoration is nearly gone; the appetite and digestion are now good; the breathing much more free, and the sleep sound; the hoarseness still in a considerable degree continues. These favourable changes in the symptoms lead the patient's friends to consider her almost wholly recovered. Whether a cure ultimately takes place will depend entirely on the care that is taken, and the species of ulceration which exists in the lungs. One thing is certain, that continued purging and vapour-bathing were the



most effectual means of exhausting the little strength she possessed ; and thus hastening her progress to an untimely grave.

The following is an impressive case.

A. K. aged about 57. For some years, health very bad ; stomach and region of liver source of much uneasiness. A fistulous ulcer in the ham and thigh, discharging much sanies, and evidently communicating with the bone, which is apparently carious. At various times, formerly, treated by respectable surgeons, with much relief and even temporary cures. During the last few months, complaints much aggravated, and having applied to no medical man of late, they have terminated in confirmed dropsy. This is only of short standing, but the limbs are much swelled. In this state, was advised to apply to Mr. Whitlaw. On going to him, patient declared that he had spent much money on medical advice, when formerly under disease, and was now little able to afford much expense in the same way, especially as he considered his case hopeless. The patient was forthwith referred to Dr. Piddock, who asked some questions, and wrote the answers in a book ; for this a guinea was charged. Ordered, as usual, No. 1 and vapour-bath, for which charged 15*s.* ; paid 4*s.* for a bottle medicine, apparently, from taste and smell, parsley-roots and juniper-berries bruised ; this was intended to increase the urine. Vapour-bath ordered frequently. Patient went back twice to take it, costing 14*s.* more ; paid 8*s.* for another bottle No. 1. No. 1 opened the bowels, and appetite rather better after this effect. The 4*s.* bottle had no effect at all ; the vapour-bath produced so great weakness, that was compelled to give it up ; the swellings were not at all reduced ; unable to afford such a heavy expense, and finding no relief after a trial of three weeks, patient resolved to discontinue the treatment.

This patient I have often visited of late, but his case appeared to me, from the first, beyond the power of medicine, and I am of opinion, that no respectable medical man would have induced him to incur such unnecessary expenses, under the delusive hopes of a cure, when all that can be done is to smoothe his passage into another world.

The following letter I have received from Daniel Jarvies, Esq. Surgeon, Margate, a gentleman whose respectability and professional experience entitle him to every confidence.

“ SIR,

*Margate, August 13, 1822.*

“ All that I can say in reference to Mr. Whitlaw’s success in the treatment of any patients of mine, is merely this :—he has had altogether *three* cases under his care—two of them, simple cases of scrofula, have been treated by him for the last fifteen months, and are now as far from being well as when he undertook their cure. The other case was a serious one of fungous excrescence of the nose—the poor man died shortly after being under the care of Mr. Whit-



law, though he assured me ‘that he possessed the means of controlling (curing) disease of every kind.’ I *then* so well calculated the powers of this charlatan, that I told him, ‘if he effected a cure upon one of the two simple cases, within a year, I would settle an annuity upon him of fifty pounds per annum.’

“In my conscience, I believe Mr. Whitlaw is entirely a pretender, and that he possesses no more knowledge of the treatment of cancer or scrofula, than either Dr. Bossy\* or Dr. Solomon.

“I am, Sir,

“Your obedient humble servant,

“DANIEL JARVIES.

“P. S. You are quite at liberty to make use of this communication in any way you think most useful.

“*To A. RENNIE, Esq. Surgeon, &c. &c.*”

The liberality of Mr. Jarvies in permitting his communication to be published for the good of society, entitles him to the highest credit. If medical men do not step forward to guard the health and lives of the community, who will, or rather who can? To detect imposture in medicine, medical knowledge is indispensable.

Mr. Travers, of London, has favoured me with the result of a striking case which fell under his observation. It was that of a patient in scrofula, who was treated by Mr. Whitlaw for many months without benefit, and was at length taken back to the hospital nearly in the same state as when she left it.

Mr. Brodie has also obliged me by the information, that several simple cases have of late applied to him for advice, after having experienced Mr. Whitlaw’s treatment for a considerable period without relief.

I shall conclude this Part I. with a case so awfully impressive, that it cannot fail to justify the absolute necessity of this my inquiry.

W. age 34, about seven years ago, a small swelling appeared in the right breast, which gradually increased for twelve months, and was then removed by Sir A. Cooper. About two years thereafter it returned, and kept slowly increasing in size till the summer of 1821, when she applied to Mr. Pearson. In Sept. 1821, Mr. Whitlaw called on patient, along with a medical man. Latter recommended Mr. Whitlaw so strongly, that she was induced to leave Mr. Pearson and put herself under his care.—Mr. Whitlaw declared it a cancer—pledged himself to send patient cured to Mr. Pearson in six weeks—ordered immediately, as usual, No. 1 and the vapour-bath; the latter thrice a week. In eight days Mr. Whitlaw told patient he could do her no good unless she came up to London, 90 miles: accordingly, accompanied him up in steam-boat, but felt excessively at his ex-

\* Dr. Bossy exhibited as a mountebank, on Tower Hill.

posing her case openly to strangers, in the steam-boat, as a dreadful cancer. In London, patient attended at Mr. Whitlaw's house almost every morning for five weeks, continuing his treatment. On the Wednesdays was always detained the whole day to be shown off, till she at length refused, yet still she was kept hanging on for several hours.

Patient heard, on one occasion, Mr. Whitlaw say to a medical man, who had come to see his patients, that it was a pity he had not come the day before, as his house, at that time, had been literally filled with cancerous cases. Patient knew this to be incorrect, as she had been kept waiting in the house from 9 till 2, and from 4 till past 6, and had not seen more than one case of supposed cancer. Saw no case of cure under Mr. Whitlaw, but many patients, after being a short time under him, went away much dissatisfied; had made very particular inquiries about cures, but never discovered any. This patient and a gentleman from Devonshire, who afterwards went away without benefit, pressed Mr. Whitlaw much to substantiate to them one case of a cure, and they would do every thing in their power to support him. So far from doing so, he only answered in a vague and evasive manner, and mentioned several cases as cures which they knew to be no cures at all.

With regard to her own case, at the end of six weeks, instead of being cured, as Mr. Whitlaw had promised, the disease was every day making more rapid progress. The vapour-bath excited the circulation so much as to put the patient in dreadful agony, so that at last the patient was obliged to be carried home after it; yet, even at this time, Mr. Whitlaw was declaring to his other patients that she was getting better. On one occasion, Mr. Whitlaw found her very faint—he ordered her to eat bread, though she threw it up again, as the *cancer was in her stomach, and bread would soak it up, and carry it off\**. On the day Mr. Whitlaw first saw the patient, he said her case was nothing at all to cure. Two days after she put herself under his care, she heard him say to a lady, that it was so desperate that he almost refused to take it. Patient saw a man come to Mr. Whitlaw with palsy, having lost the use of one side. He was ordered the vapour-bath. This man received no benefit. Heard Mr. Whitlaw say he did not want people in carriages as patients, for they did not pay him—he wished poor and middling classes, from whom he could ask the *ready money*. Heard him also declare, that a Capt. Cummins *had paid 1000*l.* to medical men before coming to him*; also, that Peter Moore, M. P. *had paid 200*l.* a year to get quit of a liver complaint till he came to him*.

Mr. Whitlaw declared to patient she could not go through the winter unless she took the vapour-bath constantly. Four respectable medical men at this time saw the patient, and declared the vapour-

\* Let no one startle at this.—Mr. Whitlaw declared, before several of his Committee, that he could dissolve *urinary calculus* by a vegetable infusion.



bath the worst treatment that could be applied. Mr. Pearson, who had uniformly treated the patient with much kindness, was grieved on hearing she was under Mr. Whitlaw, and declared she had received much injury from the treatment. In truth, the swelling in the breast had increased rapidly while under Mr. Whitlaw, extending almost over the whole mamma, with much increase of pain and heat, and almost immediately after leaving him, profuse bleedings took place. All which effects, attributes to the vapour-bath, and to heated bowls placed over the breast, by Mr. Whitlaw's orders. Frightful as this disease was, extending over great part of the breast, Mr. Whitlaw wished to burn away the breast and all with caustic.

Some of Mr. Whitlaw's patrons have imputed to me motives of self-interest and ill-will and party-feeling on account of the warmth of my style of writing on this occasion. Now I would beg leave to ask any man possessed of one spark of common humanity and sympathy for a suffering fellow-creature, with what feelings he contemplates such a case as that now described? The lady is the wife of a most respectable and highly exemplary tradesman, of sincerely religious principles. When I visited her she showed me her breast—it was one immense fungous mass of disease; a profuse and dangerous hemorrhage frequently breaks forth. The disease is rapidly gaining ground, and preying on the constitution, which there is but too much reason to fear cannot long withstand its fearful ravages. From the immense size of the diseased mass, an operation *now* is too formidable to be contemplated for a moment. The time when *judicious medical* treatment might have been of avail in protracting life is passed—passed in trifling and indolence?—no, but passed in the active employment of those very means which were most calculated to hasten a fatal termination.

Surely, surely that medical man by whose pressing solicitations this patient was induced at first to place herself under Mr. Whitlaw, if he has any feeling at all, must shrink with horror and self-reproach on hearing the result. An awful responsibility attaches to him, whether he will admit it or not.

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*To be continued.*

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Part II. will contain numerous Cases, and the names of Mr. Whitlaw's Patients, &c. &c.



